

For Immediate Release:

[DATE]

Contact:[FULL NAME OF PERSON TO CALL], [TEL # to call for more info]
D R A F T

[NAME OF FIRE DEPT] Receives State Grant for Student Awareness of Fire Education Program and [if applicable] New Senior SAFE Program

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and [NAME OF COMMUNITY] Fire Chief [Full Name] announced that [NAME OF COMMUNITY] Fire Department/District has been awarded [AMOUNT OF AWARD] for the FY '16 Student Awareness of Fire Education or S.A.F.E. Program and [AMOUNT OF AWARD] for the Senior SAFE Program by the state Department of Fire Services. Chief [Last Name] said, "Our firefighters enjoy working closely with our school teachers to help youngsters learn what they can do to prevent fires, to survive those that do occur, and how to respond correctly to fires and other emergencies." [S/he] added, "There's nothing like a third grader with a homework assignment to encourage families to test their smoke alarms and practice their home fire escape plans."

"The Senior SAFE program will help us work with the seniors in our community who are most at risk of dying in a fire," said Chief [LAST NAME]. "Seniors are the age group most at risk of dying in a fire. This program is aimed at educating seniors on fire prevention, general home safety and how to be better prepared in the event of a fire. We are partnering with [NAME OF AGENCY LIKE SENIOR CENTER] to provide fire safety information and [add what else: distribute Files of Life, night lights; install smoke alarms, house numbers, conduct in-home fire safety checks, etc.]", she/he added.

The Governor and the Legislature fund the S.A.F.E. Program through the Executive Office of the Public Safety and Security. The Senior SAFE program is funded through the fees paid by tobacco programs to the Fire Standard Compliant Cigarette Program to ensure their products meet the fire safety requirements to be sold in Massachusetts. The programs are administered by the state Department of Fire Services.

Central to the success of both programs are specially trained fire educators who work with classroom teachers and seniors to deliver age-appropriate lessons on fire and life safety. The key fire and life safety behaviors in the school-based program meet both the requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Health Curriculum Frameworks and the state Department of Fire Services *Curriculum Planning Guidebook*.

Coan said, "This is the 21st year of the S.A.F.E. Program in Massachusetts and we are truly reaching our goal of raising a fire safe generation of children." The average number of children who die in fires each year in Massachusetts has dropped by over 70%, since the program started compared to a similar timeframe before it started. Coan added, "Since consistent comprehensive fire education is the one thing we were doing for school children that until now we weren't doing for every other age group, I think it's fair to say we are proving fire education works." He added, "We hope to have the same success with the Senior SAFE Program in reducing deaths and injuries to older adults."

For more information about the S.A.F.E. or Senior SAFE Programs please call [NAME OF CHIEF OR LEAD SAFE EDUCATOR] at [Telephone #] or go to www.mass.gov/dfs and type "SAFE" in the Search box.